

September 29, 2005

Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Madisonian

**RE: Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment Released for an Operating Permit for a Sand and Gravel Pit in Madison County**

Dear Editor:

Please place the following notice in the legal publication section of your newspaper:

**Legal Notice**

**Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment Released for an Operating Permit for a sand and gravel pit in Madison County**

Moonlight Basin Ranch, LLP. (Moonlight Basin) filed an application on April 17, 2005 for an Operating Permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Environmental Management Bureau in Helena. Moonlight Basin applied for an operating permit to remove sand and gravel from a proposed pit located in Section 15, Township 6 South, Range 2 East, 6 miles west of Big Sky, MT.

The proposed operation has been reviewed for compliance under a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a General Quarry Operating Permit published by the DEQ in February 2004. DEQ has determined that this operation does not meet the requirements listed in the SEA because Moonlight Basin would have more than 5 acres disturbed and unreclaimed at one time. Moonlight Basin cannot receive an operating permit until additional environmental analysis is completed. DEQ has released a Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment (CEA) on the proposed operating permit.

Moonlight Basin seeks approval of its application for a 3 and ½ year operating permit that would include 10 permit acres. The operating permit would require Moonlight Basin to reclaim all surface disturbances. The pit would be developed into a reservoir when completed. If a permit is issued, Moonlight Basin would post a bond to ensure reclamation of the quarry.

The Draft CEA addresses issues and concerns raised during public involvement and from agency scoping. DEQ must decide whether to approve the permit as proposed, deny the request for an operating permit, or approve the operating permit with modifications. DEQ has decided to approve the permit as proposed as the preliminary preferred alternative. This is not a final decision. This conclusion may change based on comments received from the public on the Draft CEA, new information, or new analysis that may be needed in preparing the Final CEA.

Copies of the Draft CEA and application can be reviewed by the public at DEQ offices at 1520 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., in Helena, MT. Please submit comments on the Draft CEA by October 31, 2005. For information on the project, copies of the Draft CEA and to submit comments on the Draft CEA, contact:

Patrick Plantenberg  
Operating Permit Section Supervisor  
Environmental Management Bureau  
Department of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901  
(406) 444-4960 or e-mail at [pplantenberg@mt.gov](mailto:pplantenberg@mt.gov)

The Draft CEA will also be posted on the DEQ web page: [www.deq.state.mt.us](http://www.deq.state.mt.us).

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Please send your **invoice, tear sheet, and affidavit of publication** to DEQ at the above address to the attention of Patrick Plantenberg. Please indicate that the bill applies to **Doc # EMB5036046**. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patrick Plantenberg  
Operating Permit Section Supervisor  
Environmental Management Bureau

File pending moonlight basin ranch.37  
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PP/tme